OTF/FEO Interaction ... on line

To be copied and shared with all members

INDEX March 8, 1999, Volume 1, No. 5 OTF-FEO Home

Fellow Teachers,

As I am writing to you, we are on the verge of the March break, our colleagues in CUPE Local 4400- education workers for the Toronto District School Board - are on strike, speculation about a spring election date continues, and three of our Affiliates are gearing up for their annual meetings.

Since the last *Interaction*, there have been two more Community Forums on education - one in St. Thomas, and one in London. We have three more in the planning stages. Your local president has received details about how to get involved in this project. All the people who participate in this activity are anxious to continue talking about our schools and education.

As the President of the Ontario Teachers' Federation, I am always happy to hear about how well the Affiliates work together at the local level. The strength we demonstrate when we work towards the same goal is more than we can muster acting independently. We are all interested in building public support for excellent publicly supported elementary and secondary schools in Ontario.

I want to thank you for your hard work and your dedication. We will be calling on you again as we head into the election campaign, and I know you will be there when we ask.

Yours truly,

Liz Barkley

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The OTF Executive held its monthly meeting on February 26-27, 1999. Some of the issues discussed at that meeting included:

**Youth News Network (YNN)**

YNN is a for-profit company that offers schools technology infrastructure in return for a five-year contract that would allow the broadcast of a YNN produced twelve and a half minute 'news' program to all of the students in a school - no exceptions. The program contains two and a half minutes of government or corporate commercials. OTF and the Affiliates have opposed this company being given this kind of access to

our students since they first appeared on the Ontario scene in 1992. They attempted again to get into our schools in 1996. The Executive agreed to send a Communiqué to teachers encouraging them to inform school administrators and school boards that we oppose this proposal. We are also writing to all school boards to encourage them to reject the proposal.

### College of Teachers

The College of Teachers has released the latest draft of the Standards of Practice in the newest edition of *Professionally Speaking*. They are asking for feedback. The Executive supports the limitation the College has placed on the use of this document as a foundation for accrediting pre-service and in-service programs. The Executive is also reassured that the Standards of Practice are not intended to be the criteria for on-going performance appraisal of individual teachers.

### Education Day at the Canadian Aboriginal Festival

The Executive approved OTF's continued involvement with this worthwhile project. OTF and the Affiliates will name a representative to sit on an Education Advisory Committee to assist with the educational component of the day.

### Canadian Teachers' Federation

OTF has received a consultation document from the Canadian Teachers' Federation on the future vision for CTF. It has been sent to the OTF Affiliates for study and report..

### Greer Award

Each year OTF presents the Greer Award to an individual or group that has distinguished itself in the broad field of education. Past award winners have included the Canadian Education Association, the Junior Red Cross Society, Mr. Justice Hall and Dr. Lloyd Dennis, the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund and Ben Wicks. This year, the award will go to the Fédération de la jeunesse franco-ontarienne (FESFO).

### Political Action

The Executive received reports on the Political Action workshops around the province - you can check the last edition of *Interaction* to find out where they are being held.

The Executive also approved OTF's participation in the Women - Our Votes Count campaign. This is a non-partisan education initiative to encourage women to get out and vote in the next provincial election. You can find out more about this group at their web site which is found at www3.sympatico.ca/ocsj.

### Secondary School Reform

The Executive met with Ministry officials to get the latest information on secondary school reform. Since that meeting, the Minister has announced the implementation. OTF's response can be seen in the newsrelease section.

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Back to Index